

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 PANAMA 01408 161927 Z

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 SSO-00 CCO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W

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O 161849 Z MAR 73

FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6833

C O N F I D E N T I A L PANAMA 1408

EXDIS

E. O. 11652: XDGS2 DECLAS UNDETERMINED

TAGS: ASEC, PFOR, PN, US, UNSC

SUBJ: GOP TEMPORARY DETENTION OF EMBASSY PERSONNEL

1. AT APPROXIMATELY 10:50 AM THIS MORNING MARCH 16 EMBASSY TECHNICAL SECURITY OFFICER ACCOMPANIED BY FIRST SECRETARY WENT TO EL PANAMA HOTEL TO CONDUCT TECHNICAL SECURITY INSPECTION OF HOTEL QUARTERS OCCUPIED BY USDEL TO UNSC. NECESSARY TECHNICAL EQUIPMENT FOR THIS INSPECTION WAS CONTAINED IN TWO ATTACHE CASES ONE OF WHICH CARRIED BY EACH MAN. DURING PROCESS DETENTION DESCRIBED BELOW, SECURITY AGENTS INSISTED THAT ATTACHE CASES BE OPENED. OFFICERS REFUSED AND CASES WERE NEVER OPENED.

2. I HAVE SENT FOLLOWING NOTE MARCH 16 PROTESTING DETENTION OF OFFICERS BY SECURITY AGENTS.

" EXCELLENCY:

I HAVE THE HONOR OF ADDRESSING YOUR EXCELLENCY FOR THE PURPOSE OF PROTESTING THE ACTION OF SECURITY AGENTS OF THE GOVERNMENT OF PANAMA THIS MORNING IN INTERFERING IN THE CONDUCT OF THE DIPLOMATIC BUSINESS OF THIS MISSION AND OF THE UNITED STATES DELEGATION TO THE SECURITY COUNCIL BY FORCIBLY DETAINING AT THE EL PANAMA HOTEL TWO OFFICERS OF THIS MISSION CURRENTLY DETAILED TO ASSIST THE UNITED STATES DELEGATION TO THE MEETING OF THE UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL.

THIS MORNING AT APPROXIMATELY 10:50 A. M.

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MESSRS. GUY A. WIGGINS AND JOHN C. WOLF, FIRST SECRETARY AND STAFF MEMBER BEARING DIPLOMATIC PASSPORT, RESPECTIVELY, OF THIS MISSION, WERE DETAINED BY SECURITY AGENTS UPON ENTERING THE EL PANAMA HOTEL AND OBLIGED TO ACCOMPANY THE AGENTS TO A ROOM ON THE SECOND FLOOR OF THE HOTEL. ALTHOUGH BOTH OFFICERS SHOWED THE AGENTS THEIR DIPLOMATIC IDENTITY DOCUMENTS AND THEIR UNITED NATIONS DELEGATION PASSES AND WERE IN FACT PERSONALLY KNOWN TO SOME OF THE GOVERNMENT OF PANAMA PERSONNEL PRESENT, THEY WERE FORCIBLY PREVENTED FROM DEPARTING, WERE NOT PERMITTED TO TELEPHONE THIS MISSION AND WERE DETAINED FOR NEARLY AN HOUR. I MUST VIGOROUSLY PROTEST TO YOUR EXCELLENCY THIS UNWARRANTED AND INCOMPREHENSIBLE INTERFERENCE WITH THE WORK OF THIS DIPLOMATIC MISSION AND THE UNITED STATES DELEGATION TO THE MEETING OF THE UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL AND REQUEST AN EXPLANATION OF THIS REGRETTABLE INCIDENT FROM YOUR EXCELLENCY TOGETHER WITH ASSURANCES THAT ALL APPROPRIATE STEPS ARE BEING TAKEN TO PREVENT ITS RECURRENCE. ACCEPT, EXCELLENCY..."

3. TECHNICAL SECURITY OFFICER HAS JUST ENTERED HOTEL WITHOUT INCIDENT, ACCOMPANYING USDEL UPON RETURN FROM MORNING SESSION UNSC, AND WILL PROCEED TO CONDUCT INSPECTION. SAYRE

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*** Current Handling Restrictions *** EXDIS

*** Current Classification *** CONFIDENTIAL

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